

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 CFR § 1.116

U.S. Appln. No.: 09/988,702

REMARKS

Review and reconsideration on the merits are respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the allowance of claims 72, 75, 77 and 79-82.

All of the rejected claims have been canceled herein, without prejudice to filing a continuing application. Applicants do not acquiesce in the stated grounds of rejection for any of the rejected claims, but have canceled them for purposes of advancing prosecution.

Claim 90 was objected-to by virtue of its dependence on base claim 83, which was rejected. Claim 90 has now been placed in independent form, thus overcoming the grounds of objection. Because claim 90 has been amended as to form, not substance, its original scope has been maintained and this is not a narrowing amendment. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the allowance of claim 90.

Although the Office Action has been made final, claims 86 and 89 were rejected based on prior art for the first time. Thus, the finality of the Office Action is deemed to be premature. Nonetheless, to advance prosecution, applicants have simply cancelled those claims without prejudice. Applicants request withdrawal of the holding of finality only to the extent necessary to permit consideration of the enclosed Supplemental IDS.

A Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) is enclosed for completeness, although no new issues affecting patentability are deemed to be raised. The IDS includes two U.S. patents which had been cited in the corresponding International Search Report (ISR) by Examiner Levy in April, 1998, but had inadvertently not been included in Applicants' previous

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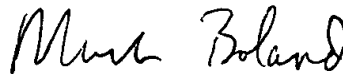
IDS, nor cited by the Examiner. Neither patent is considered material but their consideration is respectfully requested to complete the record.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

A Petition for a One-Month Extension of Time, a Notice of Appeal and checks for the required fees are submitted herewith. The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants would appreciate prompt forwarding of a Notice of Allowance for claims 72, 75, 77, 79-82 and 90.

Respectfully submitted,



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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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